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ABSTRACT

The articles in this journal issue explore current theories of the reading/writing relationship and practices in writing instruction. The titles and their authors are as follows: (1) "Cognitive Processes in Writing and Reading" (Roderic C. Botts); (2) "Brainstorming and Writing" (Brock Dethier); (3) "Group Writing: Advantages and Strategies" (Helen Dale); (4) "Written Products and Writing Problems: Assisting Students in Other Disciplines" (Annette Schneider); (5) "Developing Writing Skills in the Social Studies Classroom" (Colleen A. Welper); (6) "Journal Writing--What the Kids Think" (Barbara Leonard Warren); and (7) "A Writer's Suggestions for Teaching Creative Writing" (DeWitt Clinton). Reviews of selected books for children, adolescents, and teachers are included. (HTH)

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READING/WRITING: THEORIES AND PRACTICE

For English Teachers At All Levels
October, 1983 Volume 26, No. 1

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WISCONSIN ENGLISH JOURNAL

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CHISHOLM AWARD FOR MERITORIOUS SERVICE

Citation for NAN DOUGHERTY

Presenting this award to honor the winner of the 1983 Chisholm Award for Meritorious Service, Nan Dougherty provides a sense of great privilege and pleasure.

Nan came to Wisconsin in 1967 to join the faculty of the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire, having taught for eleven years in secondary schools in Michigan and Illinois. At UW-Eau Claire she teaches a variety of courses, in some practicing her expertise as a teacher, in others teaching the hows and why of teaching. Additionally, she supervises student teachers and has been a co-leader of a summer writing workshop based on The Bay Area Writing Project.

Her teaching has not been university bound. Over the years Nan has offered a variety of inservice workshops for the elementary and secondary teachers and business leaders. In this regard, she was a prime mover in organizing and developing a Writing Across the Curriculum In-Service Program which she and several colleagues presented to school districts around the state.

Beyond these teaching activities, Nan's accomplishments read like a Who's Who litany--of several people: evaluator for the Eau Claire School System Writing Assessment Program; State Director of the NCTE Achievement Awards in Writing Program; co-organize the Technical and Business Writing Conference; participant in the State Assessment Program in Writing; member of the State Task Force on Broadfield English/Communication Arts Certification for the DPI; and speaker or consultant at local, regional and state conferences as well as the National CEE.

For WCTE she has served as Director for the Northwest District and in the several executive offices. When Vice President in addition to planning the annual convention, she organized a state-wide Invitational Conference on Writing which included business people, parents, journalists, school board members, students and teachers from all levels. Subsequently, when President she co-developed the Humanities and Basic Skills Project which sponsored ten conferences throughout the state, again involving a broad spectrum of participants--business people, parents, school board members, school administrators and teachers.

These contributions and conferences have had statewide effect for the profession. But there's another side to Nan's portrait best told through an anecdote. She was talking with a small group at a recent convention reception when she spotted an individual--a young teacher --standing alone. She left us to go over to that person as she said--"to meet him and make him feel a part of the group for no one should feel alone at a conference."

You can read between the lines: Nan is a woman of extraordinary ideas, energy and ability. But no lines would be complete without calling to heart Nan's humane and engaging spirit, her special gift for bringing people together, for creating community. She well deserves this award.

--written by Nicholas J. Karolides, River Falls

COGNITIVE PROCESSES IN WRITING AND READING

RODERIC C. BOTTS
Marquette University—Milwaukee

Recently, as I handed a paper back in my freshman composition section I asked a certain student if she liked to read. Her eyes lit up at my question and we passed a few moments sharing reactions to books we both had read and exchanging titles of others we had enjoyed. Then I asked, as I often ask this kind of student, whether she had read much as a younger child. The answer was yes, as it usually is, books and more books from the very earliest of memories, first read aloud by someone else and next absorbed silently as the ability to solo developed. This student was perhaps the best writer in that section of freshman composition and would rate among the best in any other section. No doubt she had been a top writer in every one of her classes since first grade.

As teachers of English, we know from such encounters that writing and reading are closely related processes. Furthermore; structured empirical research and personal accounts by professional writers support these everyday observations.[1] Good readers are likely to be good writers, and good writers are predictably avid readers of long standing. Given this intimate relationship, it follows that reading and writing must share a number of cognitive processes related to language,[2] and it seems reasonable, furthermore to assume that if we can identify and understand these processes, we might do more to help students write and read better. Even if new knowledge about cognitive processes in reading and writing doesn't produce new teaching methods, it should at least help us evaluate the methods we use now and suggest which approaches to emphasize. Furthermore, a study of ways in which reading and writing are linked in the mind will give us a greater understanding of the top level reader-writers we find on every grade level and perhaps shed light on some students with chronic difficulties.[3]

Some important relationships seem so obvious that they may be overlooked. One of them is that both reading and writing stem from spoken language, yet both are different from it functionally and cognitively. Written text is not merely encoded vocal sound. While there are arbitrary relationships established by convention between some sounds of a language and the letters of the alphabet its users have adopted, between phonemes and graphemes, the relationships are neither strict enough nor systematic enough in any writing system to support the argument that writing simply encodes the meaningful sounds of speech. Certainly sound and writing interact in complex ways little understood, but the process of writing is not a process of encoding silent speech generated in the mind, nor is the process of reading a process of decoding to silent speech heard in the mind. True, we may sometimes "hear" a voice as we read or write, and such data as spelling errors that reflect phonic interpretations demonstrate the connection between speech and print; but this connection, especially when speech is silent, is tenuous and cognitively unnecessary. Text in writing and reading often relates to meaning without any mediation of sounds.[4]

Another way in which they are alike is that, in contrast to speaking and listening, reading and writing are most often learned consciously, through transaction between a teacher and a learner. Infants attend to the sea of spoken sounds around them and learn to identify the distinctive

features of the language without anyone making a conscious, systematic effort to teach them to understand speech. From listening to segments of a language, children learn its grammar and learn to produce grammatical utterances themselves. Seemingly it is an inevitable result of being born into an environment containing spoken language.[5] No such inevitability attaches to reading and writing. Although some people do learn to read and write without instruction, and even though many people need much less instruction than we may think, most people would not become initially literate without mediation, motivation, and encouragement. Even with instruction some people, who have learned naturally to speak and comprehend spoken language, do not learn to read and write.

A third way in which reading and writing are alike is that both aim at reconstructing parts of events, and ideas, the originals of which no longer exist. In contrast to spoken language, which springs from an immediate and concrete environment, reading and writing exist to deal with ideas and things absent from either the reader or writer or both. But because the original as the writer knew or seeks to know it is forever gone, reading and writing can never wholly accomplish the aim of reconstruction. The reader and the writer can produce only approximations which may become approximations of approximations, within the field of the original event, but never recreating it. Unless the text is a guide book for tourists or is illustrated with graphics, writing or its reader seldom has an at-hand reference to fix it. Paradoxically, however, it is written language removed in time and space, which freezes those vanished events and ideas in approximations, to be reapproximated at some other time. History is thus primarily written language, for past events exist almost exclusively through writing. The same can be said of criticism, philosophy, and other disciplines. Of course, some history is oral, but oral language is the language of present action and current states of being. The farther it moves away from the immediate, the more it resembles written language.

And the more it resembles written language, the more it must rely on language itself to give it meaning. Both reading and writing depend on language, not the immediate world, for primary context, explication, and clarification. Hence, the more experience with written language the writer and the reader have had, the more potential facility in reading and writing they will have. As Smith emphasizes in *Understanding Reading*, reading depends on what the reader brings to the text.[6] Certainly this must include not only experiential knowledge of the world, but also experiential knowledge of language. The struggle to reconstruct events through reading and writing depends on the extent of prior experience with reading and writing stored in the mind of the reader or writer. The more extensive those experiences, the more likely the reader and writer will be to prevail in the struggle.

Constructing arguments and other extended abstract discourse is also a major aim of reading and writing. Indeed, reading and writing are better suited to abstract discourse than is speech. Written text allows readers and writers to set their own pace, to review language already processed, to select or pass over details, to focus on segments they select, to gather more information away from the text, to erase and revise, and to correct errors. This flexibility the printed text provides helps writers to set forth difficult concepts and readers to comprehend them.

Most complex thought originates either in writing or in reading. Reading and writing are the means for creating new ideas and acquiring abstract knowledge. In terms of a cognitive theory, linguistic meaning comes from the long term memory (LTM). The long term memory contains "chunks" of

information, most of which is non-verbal, stored in a seemingly infinite network of relationships.[7] Every idea or chunk of cognitive material is potentially related to every other idea in this network. Reading and writing enable a person to hold part of that network in consciousness so that new perceptions can be linked to it or existing chunks be connected by new strands of the network. This process is akin to metaphor making.[8]

The reader and writer are the active agents. New ideas do not exist in the written text itself, for marks on a sheet of paper, no matter how arranged, have no meaning in and of themselves. But anyone with a knowledge of the language, the ability to read, and an adequate repertory of ideas can use those marks on paper to probe the LTM, activate some part of its network, and move on from that cognitive material to establish something new. Thus, writing is a process of discovery.

What has just been described are processes of learning and creativity. Both involve moving from known ideas to new ideas. Such movement from known to new is one characteristic of coherence.[9] In the writing process the writer continuously keeps in touch with what he or she has already written by repeating key works and concepts, by using pronouns with antecedents in the text already generated, by using parallel structures, and by using structural markers such as "therefore," "then," "also," "second," and the like.[10] In accord with the cognitive process of creating and maintaining coherence, this known information is characteristically placed in the first or subject part of the sentence and the new information is placed in the second or predicate part. Structural markers are placed between ideas to indicate new directions or continuing relationships. Without coherence the writer or reader will not be able to continue with the text because it will be incomprehensible.

In a comprehensible text, comprehension is derived, according to Smith, from the reader's making predications or hypotheses about the text and testing these as the eyes jump through the print.[11] In the reading process, conceptual material such as memories of past experiences and knowledge one already has, including knowledge of the text just read, is brought into consciousness from the LTM through the perception of the written text. This focused conceptual material is organized according to the constraints of the previously activated knowledge and the constraints of coherence so that the reader can make predictions about the text ahead. In a coherent text, the new continuously becomes known and comprehended as the reader's hypotheses are proved.

The more knowledge or information the reader has available to be activated by the text, the more comprehensible the text is likely to be. If the reader finds that one of his predictions is not proved, he will move back to a previous point of comprehension, check the data on which he based his prediction, i.e., re-examine the text or his ideas, reformulate his hypotheses, and try again. Speed and ease of comprehension, then, are directly related to the contents of the reader's LTM, the material he brings to the text, as well as to text coherence.[12]

One kind of knowledge a reader brings to a text is knowledge of structure, ranging from the structure of an entire genre of writing through the structures of the many kinds of parts making up a piece of discourse. Predictions about structure at all levels go on simultaneously and continuously as one reads. Thus, a reader may flounder, or at least feel uncomfortable, if a text purported to be a novel does not match his expectations of what a novel should be, or if the conclusion of an argument doesn't meet the expectations created by the premises, or if a word is not one predicted by the rules of parallel structure or grammatical concord. E. D. Hirsch,

Jr., claims that one lesson for writers from this is clear: A writer should try to write in such a way that readers can make predictions as accurately and easily as the complexity of the thought allows.[13]

Knowledge of language structures is, of course, necessary not only for a reader but also for a writer. In the writing process, a person, by means of memory probes, including reading and writing the text being written, brings conceptual material into consciousness where it gets attached to organizing structures and semantic forms which are eventually put in written text. In this process, the counterpart of a reader's prediction, according to Smith, is the writer's intention.[14] The writer begins with an idea he wants to set forth, often vague or inchoate, perhaps forming around a general theme or a kernel of thought. This initial intention contains few, if any, words, and no sentences or paragraphs. To set forth this intention, the writer must develop sets of smaller, intermediate and immediate intentions, probe his knowledge of written conventions, and maintain the confidence that from whichever first single word he chooses he will be able to recall and set down word after word until, five or 50 or 50,000 words later his intention will be fulfilled. Intentions range from the large sense of what the end product eventually will be to the immediate, limited possibilities for choosing the next word within the constraints of both what the writer has already written and what he intends to write.

Writers and readers use intentions and predictions to probe the memory for material connected to their initial ideas and expectations. If material is found, it is set into words and the writer or reader progresses. If it is not found, the reader or writer will continue to probe, for a limited time, until some acceptable material is found or until frustration dictates some other course.[15] This next course can be a change in expectation, a change in intention, or the addition of new material to the LTM from another source. If writer or reader is dealing with well known subject matter or concrete matter close at hand--e.g., signs, instructions, guidebooks--progress may be rapid and easy. Such writing moves toward the convention of speech. If, on the other hand, the subject matter is obscure or abstract, progress will be more difficult for both writer and reader. At least some of this difficulty arises from the fact that what we have in our minds is not neatly wrapped and stored packages of information, memories, and ideas, but rather dense webs of connections between masses of material more or less shaped and rarely, if ever, static. A probe into this web brings forth not a discrete, structured fact, concept, or image, but rather a piece of thought trailing threads and strands connected to other chunks of thought. Hence, no text ever specifies the subject exactly; it will always paradoxically, say both more and less than the writer intends and the reader expects.[16] It will simultaneously lead writer or reader on and frustrate him; it will at once clarify and obscure, reveal and hide. The writer often finds, then, that although what he has just written has helped him fix his idea, it does not seem to be exactly the idea he wanted fixed and that where that idea has taken him is not exactly where he wanted to go. He has reconstructed history, but it is not the exact history he thought he had in mind.

Because both reading and writing are processes in which the mind moves from the known to the unknown, the more a reader or writer knows, that is, the more he or she has stored in the long term memory, about the structure of written language and about the subject of the text being considered, the more surely that person will be able to control the unknown; i.e., the more skillfully that person will be able to read and write. If his reading interests and tastes have been broad, an avid reader will have much knowledge of both written language and subject matter. Such a student will

often appear to write well with little instruction, while people who read little will seem impervious to one's best efforts to teach.

These best efforts might include teaching students how to formulate intentions, how to plan at all levels of the writing process, and how to relate intentions and plans to the ideas coming forth at the moment. They might include teaching students how to anticipate the writer's intentions as they read and how to relate those expectations to the text in order to comprehend it. Beyond these efforts, the best method of all to help young people read and write better is to do what we can as early as we can to help them become avid readers.

NOTES

[1] Peter Evanechko, Lloyd Ollila, and Robert Armstrong, "An Investigation of the Relationships Between Children's Performance in Written Language and Their Reading Ability," *Research in the Teaching of English*, 8(1974), 315-326.

Donald Hammill and Gaye McNutt, "Language Abilities and Reading: A Review of the Literature on Their Relationship," *Elementary School Journal*, 80(1980), 269-277.

Sandra L. Stotsky, "Sentence Combining as a Curricular Activity: Its Effect on Written Language Development and Reading Comprehension," *Research in the Teaching of English*, 9(1975), 30-71.

[2] Although there is a large and rapidly expanding body of research on the processes of text and discourse comprehension and production, there has been little attention paid to the nexus of reading and writing or to the role of one in the other. See for example Robert DeBeaugrande, *Text, Discourse, and Process: Toward a Multidisciplinary Science of Texts*, (Norwood, N.J.: Ablex Publishing Corp., 1980) and Kent Kelling, "Reading in the Writing Process," *Arizona English Bulletin*, 19(1976).

[3] Allan Collins and Dedre Gentner, "A Framework for a Cognitive Theory of Writing," in ed. Lee W. Gregg and Erwin R. Steinberg, *Cognitive Processes in Writing*, (Hillsdale, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1980).

[4] Charles Cooper and Lee Odell, "Considerations of Sound in the Composing Process of Published Writers," *Research in the Teaching of English*, 10(1976), 103-115. Cooper and Odell's research does not eliminate a role for sound in composing, but it does suggest that for some professional writers sound is simply not a factor in the processes of their writing. It may be that a concern for rhythm and other stylistic features in writing that seem related to sound stem from an element in the deep structure which also underlies these features in oral language. This element may be related to something in the cognitive structure that underlies sensory images in language generally. It is as important that a text be "clear" as that it "sound right." See also George L. Dillon, *Constructing Texts: Elements of a Theory of Composition and Style* (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1981), p. 47, and Patrick Groff, "Children's Speech Errors and Their Spelling," *Elementary School Journal*, 74(1973), 88-96.

[5] Roger Brown, *A First Language: The Early Stages* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1973).

[6] Frank Smith, *Understanding Reading: A Psycholinguistic Analysis of Reading and Learning to Read*, 2nd ed. (N.Y., Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1978).

[7] Walter Kintsch, *Memory and Cognition, 2nd ed.* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1977).

[8] Wallace Chafe, "Creativity in Verbalization and its Implications for the Nature of Stored Knowledge," in *Discourse Production and Comprehension*. Roy O. Freedle, ed, (Norwood, N.J.: Ablex Publishing Corporation, 1977), pp. 41-55.

[9] Herbert H. Clark and Susan E. Haviland, "Comprehension and the Given-New Contract," in Freedle, *ibid.*

Continued on page 17

BRAINSTORMING AND WRITING

BROCK DETHIER
University of New Hampshire, Durham

As we learn more about the writing processes of good writers, we find what we've traditionally called "brainstorming" appearing in many guises. It is a major method writers use throughout their work, not just a quirky way to generate ideas. When we brainstorm, we try to establish a direct line to our inner voice, the speaker in our mind that always has something to say to us, if we have the time and the concentration to listen. What we know and are learning about monitoring that voice should help us teach writing; even without fully understanding the semi-hidden processes of the brain, we can use them to make writing easier, more creative, and more productive. In this paper I will consider briefly some of the theoretical work relevant to brainstorming, then present a series of brainstorming methods useful to any writer or writing class.

Jean Piaget's early work on children viewed the "egocentric speech" with which children accompanied their activities as a "sidetracking of the original function of language," a remnant of "autistic thought," discarded when the child learns more efficient, audience-directed modes of speaking.[1] In the thirties, L. S. Vygotsky reversed the developmental order of speech, asserting that children internalized what they learned from social interaction into egocentric speech, and then into inner speech. He suggested that egocentric speech, far from being useless, served as a tool to help the child understand and deal with the outside world, a tool the child would turn to whenever the task became difficult. In effect, he gave developmental credence to the use of words not to communicate understanding, but to discover or build that understanding.[2]

Vygotsky saw the value of speech that means something to us but seldom to others, speech that contains large portions of junk and bits of gold--speech that, when written down by an adult faced with a task, we call brainstorming. An adult's scribble may seem far removed from a child's babble, but I believe the function of the two processes is similar, and that we need to take a Vygotskian second look at our attitudes toward brainstorming in order to turn our own mental streams most effectively into writing.

Although writing is still viewed by some as a discipline to be approached only with sturdy weapons--clear outlines and focused thought--in my dealings with student writers I find that what they often need is more garbage to pick through, more options to choose from, more babble, more of the child's willingness to become absorbed in an invented world, a willingness which Freud thought connected children and writers.[3] My students need to find a voice, a unique personal style that seems natural for each particular writer. Certainly, this writing voice must have some relation to the inner voice.

Simply "letting go," however, does not constitute brainstorming, though it may be a good first step. Most people need some kind of direction or impetus or model to brainstorm productively, to keep from feeling too self-conscious. If told simply to brainstorm, students will flounder as much as they do when told simply to write, and though this floundering may

be instructive for the teacher, it's not likely to improve student attitudes or productivity. We can help our students brainstorm by participating with them and using ourselves as guinea pigs, by creating group activities in which students can get strength and encouragement from their peers, by introducing brainstorming throughout the term, for different purposes and under different names, and by letting them in on professional "secrets."

To capture hidden thoughts, most writers try to produce the conditions under which the voice inside speaks most loudly and clearly, and to keep their monitors free of other concerns as they write. James Moffett takes concentration and inner listening one step further and argues that we do our deepest, most creative thinking when we're not writing and when the voice within is "suspended," mesmerized with a mantra.[4] Deep thinking *before* writing makes sense--the act of recording the inner stream inevitably creates some level of self-consciousness that destroys total concentration. Yet brainstorming--writing down thought as quickly as possible, with no attention to form--may bring writers as close as they can get to attaining a meditative state while still writing. Writers often freewrite precisely to alter their normal mental processes, make unusual connections, tap hitherto unconscious thought, generate peculiar ideas. Peter Elbow makes the relationship between meditation and writing clear when he advises the stuck freewriter to repeat a mantra of sorts: "I can't think of anything to say, I can't think of anything to say. . . ."[5]

As researchers like Janet Emig and Barrett Mandell remind us, even at its fastest or most automatic, writing is not a word-for-word recording of a thought stream.[6] The writer chooses each new word, each new bit of meaning, from many possibilities, making new connections and ignoring other possible ones, and these processes themselves constitute thought and lead to learning and development. While taking up the pen destroys some of the benefits of the trance, verbalizing and recording produce mental changes that may be just as valuable, especially if the writer making the choices is making them without pressure, almost unconsciously, as brainstormers do.

No matter what method they advocate, most writing teachers agree that shedding the tight, constricting skin of self-consciousness is the key to making the writing process less painful and more productive. As Mandel says, "Writing increases in fluency and specificity to the degree that the conscious mind is not present to itself."[7] Writers need to get used to the feeling of words flowing, of idea following idea without having to pass by the critical eye of the part of ourselves Gail Godwin calls "The Watcher at the Gates."[8] Always-critical writers, first-draft perfectionists, inevitably bring on themselves a sense of frustration, of mental stuttering, that can become writer's block. Any additional source of self-consciousness --observing the writing process, for instance, as writers are asked to do for protocol study--will inevitably create further interruptions in the successful monitoring of the inner voice, a factor that may account for some of the recursiveness researchers like Sondra Perl have found in protocols.[9] Writers try to recreate the flow of the inner voice by going back; they try, in Perl's terms, to get back in touch with the felt sense.

We use brainstorming techniques to get in touch with that felt sense, that inner voice, and to follow it as long as possible, interrupting, channeling, directing the flow of ideas minimally, if at all. Although some see brainstorming as the closest waking imitation of the magical edge-of-consciousness moments that sometimes appear to be our most creative, this connection has been overemphasized. We certainly hope to tap the deep streams when we brainstorm, but associating brainstorming with dreaming makes us think of it as whimsical or magical, a process to generate ideas,

but of limited use thereafter. However, we can considerably broaden our conception of the usefulness of brainstorming if we keep in mind its connection with Vygotsky's problem-solving speech. The flow of words can help us whenever we're solving a problem, and by looking at and playing with the processes involved in regulating the flood of semi-conscious thought, writers learn to control it and use it.

Brainstorming as a regular part of the writing process can help writers in a number of ways. Most important, it tends to be more relaxing than sitting down at the typewriter or legal pad and trying to compose coherent, connected sentences. When we declare ourselves to be doing something other than *writing*, we play the game by more permissive rules. I became interested in the pedagogical uses of brainstorming when I noticed that I was always more eager to jot quick notes on a pad than to compose whole sentences. Because following the freed mind on its path seemed so enjoyable, and often productive, I began to explore ways to follow it at other stages of the composing process. Brainstorming is the writing work that doesn't seem like work, the productive process that doesn't produce headaches; the more steps of the writing process that we can turn over to brainstorming, the better off we'll be, if only because we've diminished the sense of dread with which many people face a writing task.

Brainstorming helps the writer get more done on a project before actually writing a paragraph. For those of us who tend to jump right into the first sentence, conscious use of brainstorming techniques may be especially valuable, giving us a chance to develop an idea more fully before we start constricting it by choosing one of the many possible meanings to write into a sentence.

If we expand the brainstorming process beyond the realm of creative idea generation, we find that it can help us on everything from titles to conclusions, from the smallest particular details to the focus and organization of the whole piece, stimulating insights by "creating contexts in which they are likely to occur"--Mandel's definition for what "works."[10] Writers in the habit of taking a piece of a project and letting their minds run wild with it will be likely to cover their subjects more completely than will writers with an outline and a series of drafts, for the brainstormer will likely discover the unanswered questions, the unexpected objections.

I have categorized the exercises and processes I'm discussing into four stages: generating ideas and direction, making initial connections, developing a perspective, and insuring thoroughness. I will present them in the order in which I introduce them in class, though the order is somewhat artificial, and I encourage use of these methods whenever they seem fitting. By creating this particular order, I hope to show that what Sabina Thorne Johnson calls "conceptually polar differences" between associative and analytical approaches are not so polar.[11] Although I think all the approaches I deal with share a number of characteristics which justify the term brainstorming, I'm less interested in terminology than in showing that these approaches do interrelate and that they all contribute to the same goal--easier, better writing.

The first stage resembles most closely what we've traditionally called brainstorming--the goals are generating ideas from which to select a topic and getting the first vague sense of direction or frame or focus for a piece of writing. Freewriting comes first, usually on the first day of class, as I try to change radically the students' image of writing as a painful and ponderous task always preceded by Roman numeral outlines and

notecards full of information. I participate with my students, as I do during all these exercises, and after our eight or ten minutes I solicit any interesting or surprising connections the writing produced (usually supplying one of my own for example), and sometimes ask for a word count to emphasize that speed and fluency are more important at this stage than craft.

Also on the first day, we all write down a list of subjects that interest us and that might possibly turn into topics. Again I write on the board, and occasionally explain what kind of paper I might make out of my topics, trying to spark students to see the possibilities inherent in their own subjects. One goal of all brainstorming exercises is to shake students out of their limited personal perspectives, to show them many possibilities where they saw only one. If I list cross-country skiing as one of my topics, I can count on my students suggesting a dozen different papers I could write, about origins or techniques or equipment or good areas. At the end of the day, I ask students to continue their lists outside of class, and come to the next class or conference with at least 25 subjects.

Very often I devote the next class to a series of brainstorming activities that I borrowed from Don Murray's reporter-training techniques.[12] We each pick a topic and write titles for it, then jot down leads or ends to go with one of the titles. This process requires only a few minutes, but I like to spend some time with each step, explaining why I like or dislike some of my titles, showing how many different papers could grow from one topic, demonstrating the myriad possibilities available even after choosing a title and how the lead seriously narrows those possibilities. I also have students get into groups after each step, read each others' contributions, and choose a best title or lead or end for each person. Few things encourage a timid writer more than to have a peer say "that sounds really interesting."

As the last step in this stage (or, just as logically, the first step in the next), I return to the free write, this time imposing a little more restriction, asking the writers to start with an idea or title or lead and then follow their pens. As with each exercise, I encourage them to continue the process on their own, and explain how authors like Elbow would urge them to do most of their writing in this fashion, producing quick, unstructured drafts, each building on and becoming clearer than the last.

The second stage of exercises assumes that everyone has at least the germ of an idea; we flesh out those ideas and begin to make some preliminary connections. This stage is perhaps my favorite in the whole writing process: once I'm enamored with an idea, I enjoy sitting with a legal pad, jotting down related ideas and sub-topics, trying to keep my pen up with my brain which is often giddy with the sense of possibilities (a sense which, sadly, hardly ever seems to be fulfilled). Sometimes these sessions are productive enough that I can go back over the jottings, number them, and write a first draft from there.

With the ideas starting to take form, I call for details. Writing texts offer endless detail exercises, good for getting students to look closely at *something*. But students see more value in coming up with details about a topic they're working on, because they understand that their list may eventually make writing a paper easier. Again, a lot can be done with such lists in class. Sometimes we "map" scribblings spatially on the board, or I'll ask my students to pick, from their own lists or from others', the best or three best details, and explain their choices, making slowly, and with peer help, the kinds of decisions that constitute a large part of writing.

Mapping provides a transition to the next stage, and is the first of the exercises to use spatial arrangement to help sort ideas. I put my topic in the middle of the board, then start brainstorming associated ideas, writing them down, drawing lines from them to others that they seem to relate to, taking suggestions from the class. Some students find this visualization more helpful than lists; certainly it leads the writer to make connections between ideas that might not have been clear from the previous methods, to represent visually an inner schema.

The third stage involves circling around the subject, experimenting, trying to find an appealing approach or angle. Camera metaphors seem particularly appropriate at this stage. Again I put my subject on the board, and ask students to consider the different distances and angles from which the subject can be approached. If I'm interested, say, in a local commune, do I want to start with a wide angle aerial shot that includes most of the commune's physical features? Or should I focus on one person or place or attitude that seems significant or representative? Or do I want a collage effect, many scenes thrown on the screen as quickly as the eye can take them in? Sometimes before I suggest these possibilities, I'll ask the class to take four minutes and write on something with which everyone is familiar; inevitably, they approach from different distances, and learn from comparing their own stances to their classmates'.

I play the same kind of game with point of view, starting with the subject on the board and surrounding it with the names of people or groups who would have specific, and different, interests in it, taking suggestions from the class as fast as they can explain each new perspective. For instance, if the drinking age is the subject, we'll end up with twelve or fifteen different interested parties circling it, from students to merchants to police to John Q. Public. A student with a notion to write about her outrage with the drinking law may still assume her own perspective, but after going through this process, she is likely to anticipate and deal with counter arguments better.

The last stage of the process inevitably begins to shade into more disciplined, rhetorical strategies, for in this stage we try to make sure that all angles have been covered, all ideas collected, and we start looking for order. First we play reporters again, asking who-what-when-where-why-how, then brainstorming readers' questions and our responses. We start with the major question the subject raises, then imagine the question that the first answer will provoke, and so forth. The order generated by such a system is perfect for a reporter, but useful for the rest of us, too; putting themselves through their own question and answer period can show writers gaps that they were blind to while immersed in the subject.

Drawing an analysis tree also ensures thoroughness, while still allowing the free thinking and relaxation of brainstorming.[13] We again find the central question that the topic raises, putting it on the far left side of a piece of paper (preferably a large one), trying to include in the question the play of conflicting forces in the topic. When writing about a high school senior's decision, for instance, the major question might be, "Is college worth the price?" We then figure out what questions need to be answered before we can attack the primary question, and we put these two or three secondary questions on the first set of branches or brackets to the right. (In this case they might be, "What are the major benefits of college?," "What are the costs?," and "What are the alternatives?") We continue breaking down each question into component questions until, at the far right side of the page, we arrive at what are usually data or fact questions, ones we have to gather information about before working up the scale to the

left. Although this method works better for some topics (particularly research topics) than others, in fifteen or twenty minutes it can yield a new perspective on a subject, and prevent us from inadvertently covering only a portion of the topic.

Finally, as a kind of insurance (and only after the relatively free play of the other stages), I encourage my students to use standard rhetorical modes to examine their subjects. I introduce them to various rhetorics, Aristotle's topics, and the "particle, wave, field" perspective of Young, Becker, and Pike, and encourage them to run their subjects through these heuristics, playfully or systematically, and see if thinking of their subjects in terms of cause and effect or "field" shows them anything new.[14]

It may seem as though we've come a long way from jotting random thoughts on the page, but that is precisely the point. Brainstorming can take writers a long way--at least to the verge of a first draft which should be relatively painless and complete. When brainstormers finally get to writing sentences and paragraphs, they find the process easier because, like the children Vygotsky studied, they've been thinking about their task, and talking to themselves about it. And now they're ready.

NOTES

[1] Jean Piaget, *The Language and Thought of the Child* (New York: The Humanities Press, 1959), p. 16.

[2] See his *Thought and Language* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1962) and *Mind in Society* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1978).

[3] Sigmund Freud, "The Relation of the Poet to Day-Dreaming," in *On Creativity and the Unconscious* (New York: Harper and Row, 1958), pp. 44-54.

[4] James Moffett, "Writing, Inner Speech, and Mediation," *College English*, 44 (March 1982), pp. 231-246.

[5] *Writing Without Teachers* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1973), p. 3.

[6] See Janet Emig, "Writing as a Mode of Learning," CCC, 28 (1977, pp. 122-128, and Barrett J. Mandel, "Losing One's Mind: Learning to Write and Edit," CCC, 29 (1978), pp. 362-368. Piaget, Vygotsky, and a number of other researchers including A. R. Luria, Jerome Bruner, James Britton, and William Irmscher, also attest to the psychological benefits of writing.

[7] Barrett J. Mandel, "The Writer Writing is Not at Home," CCC, 31 (1980), p. 372.

[8] "The Watcher at the Gates," *New York Times*, 9 Jan. 1977, Sec. VII, p. 31.

[9] "Understanding Composing," CCC, 31 (1980), pp. 363-369.

[10] "The Writer Writing is Not at Home," p. 375.

[11] "The Ant and the Grasshopper: Some Reflections on Prewriting," *College English*, 43 (1981), pp. 232-241.

[12] I am indebted to Don Murray for many of the specific techniques discussed in this article and for provoking much of the thought that led to its writing.

[13] For an excellent discussion of such trees, see Marya W. Holcombe and Judith K. Stein, *Writing for Decision Makers* (Belmont, Ca.: Lifetime Learning Publications, 1981), pp. 24-29.

[14] Richard Young, Alton Becker, and Kenneth Pike, *Rhetoric: Discovery and Change* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1970).

GROUP WRITING: ADVANTAGES AND STRATEGIES

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As class sizes increase and the paper load becomes heavier, many writing instructors have tried group writing as a means of easing that load--and yet they've felt uncomfortable with the process. They question whether each student will do an equal amount of writing and learning, and feel vaguely guilty when they bring home fewer papers in a class set. When I first started using group writing, my motivation was easing the paper load, and I did feel some guilt and frustration with the whole process. After having worked with groups for a few years, though, I see very identifiable educational advantages. Fewer papers are just a lovely byproduct.

FORMAT

The format I use for group writing spans the course of a semester. I assign three or four students to a group depending on how many times I intend to use the writing groups during the semester. Each person in the group has the primary responsibility once to complete outside of class whatever was not finished in class. So if I wanted to do three group assignments, I would place three people in each group. I do assign the groups so that each group includes students with stronger and weaker writing skills.

An average group writing assignment takes two full class sessions and part of a third. On Monday the assignment is given and the groups meet and discuss what they want the paper to say, make up an outline, decide what examples they want to use to develop the body paragraphs, and then they begin to write. Usually they can get the introduction written and part of the body. Sometimes, if the topic is an especially complex one, I give the topic on the previous Friday so the students can come in with more focused ideas.

The person in charge of the group for that assignment (the primary writer) takes home and polishes what has already been written by the group and completes, in rough draft form, the paragraphs that the group had only had time to outline. The primary writer has obvious motivation for the group to work hard. The more the group completes in class, the less that person is responsible for outside of class. Then he or she makes a duplicate of that rough draft for each group member and has until Wednesday to do so.

On Wednesday, the person in charge gives each group member the duplicated rough draft and the group spends the entire period changing, deleting, adding--revising and editing. I find that unless each member has his/her own copy, the process doesn't work very smoothly. The primary writer combines all the editions of the other copies onto his/her own and is responsible for bringing in the final draft on Friday. That day I set aside some time for each group member to proofread the final version for mechanical errors. Since they all receive the same grade on the paper, they must have this opportunity to review it for correctness.

Usually I let the strongest, or second strongest group member do the first assignment, hoping that by the end of the semester, the weaker stu-

dents will have improved their skills sufficiently to feel comfortable being in charge. Sometimes, too, I base the order on the difficulty of the upcoming assignments, putting the strongest member in charge of the most complex assignment. The better, more competitive students accept someone else being primarily responsible because they know that they have a great deal of input and have the chance to do final proofreading before the paper is evaluated. Even the less committed students work hard, knowing that they'll be letting their classmates down if they don't.

There are, of course, other structures for these groups. If there were only two essays the instructor wanted written in groups, and these essays were fairly difficult, it would be possible, for instance, to assign groups of four and have one person be in charge of the first draft and another person responsible for the final one. In class group sessions, students seem to work equally hard in contributing to ideas and organization, syntax and usage. The only element that is crucial is that each group member has responsibility outside of class at least once.

ASSIGNMENTS AND OTHER USES

There are many kinds of assignments that work well in groups, and there are no real limitations, but I have found it best to have the earlier essays be tightly structured ones for which the students clearly understand a set organization. Although I usually use groups for expository and persuasive writing, I also have had them do descriptive writing. One descriptive assignment, in essense writing from a model, has very definite criteria of evaluation which allow the groups to decide clearly if what they are doing is what is expected. For instance, they must describe a general scene before they describe specific parts in a pattern, using many verbals and figures of speech. As the semester progresses and the groups feel more comfortable, less structured assignments can be used.

Although a group of three would write three full group essays over the course of a semester, I also use the groups for other purposes. For instance, they work very well for brainstorming for ideas on a topic and for prewriting activities and exercises to learn a basic rhetorical strategy such as classification or cause/effect. Students help each other learn the mode of organization and remind each other of tips or pitfalls the instructor might have mentioned when teaching the material.

Sometimes, when the organization of an essay is difficult, I have the groups write introductions and outlines for sample topics, and this has been very effective. Recently, I used group outlining to help teach the essay of definition. The organizational problem for my freshman composition students has been that this essay can be organized and developed so many different ways--by using exemplification, by negating, by showing causes or effects, by classifying, etc. I wanted the class to have practice developing definition essays various ways without actually having to write out multiple essays. I divided the class into groups of three and put a few abstract nouns on the board (such as "procrastination") about which they could choose to write. Each group had to develop the outline by a different means; one group was assigned process, one contrast, and so forth. Each group wrote an introductory paragraph and outline on a transparency, and by showing all of the transparencies to the class, they could better see all the means of development available to them. At this point, the instructor could have each student write an individual essay, so that the groups would have functioned just for prewriting, or the groups could work together on an essay of definition based on the exercise topic or on any other topic.

A slight variation on group outlining works well for reviewing for essay exams. The instructor can assign sample questions which cover important aspects of what is to be tested and let each group outline an answer on a transparency. As all the responses are shown and discussed, the material will have been reviewed without extensive lecturing. The students can see not only the ideas which are important, but also the process by which one organizes those ideas before answering an essay exam question.

ADVANTAGES

The biggest difference between group and individual writing is that group work allows students to observe how other minds work through the organizing and writing process. Students not only learn new approaches, but also test ideas against each other, so the papers offer the students' best, clearest thoughts. Initially, I was concerned about their writing "patchwork" papers of diverse ideas, but they monitored each other's logic so that the group assignments have produced very coherent papers.

I often use group writing at the beginning of the semester because it allows class members to become acquainted, promoting a relaxed atmosphere which enables students to write better. I generally assign the writing groups so students meet and begin to feel comfortable with people they didn't know before. Closeness built in the writing groups spills over into other class sessions, making peer editing run more smoothly, creating a class cohesiveness. One aspect of these writing groups which I enjoy is the break from the more formal lecture format. The instructor can circulate, discussing ideas, word choice, and syntax with each group, "troubleshooting" as needed.

An assignment I use at the beginning of the semester which really promotes closeness is one on family placement. For just this one exercise on writing through exemplification, I group the students by oldest, middle, youngest, or only child. Each of these can then be sub-divided into smaller groups of three to four. I ask them to discuss and then list advantages and disadvantages of their place in the family. As each group presents its opinions to the class, heated discussions occur and we discuss stereotypes--the ignored middle child, for instance--and then each group writes about the topic. The students form bonds by realizing others feel the same as they do about their "lot" within the family. These papers are rich in specific detail because each person has unique experiences and, therefore, something to contribute. The "sophisticated" eighteen year olds still have strong feelings about little brother's getting to use the car at sixteen whenever he wants to, while they had to beg and fight for permission to use the car.

These groups can aid us with much more than class cohesiveness, however. As writing instructors, we all spend some time on grammar and usage, word choice, and sentence effectiveness. We can assign exercises and correction sheets, and while many students learn to apply what they learn from exercises such as these, many don't. In groups, there is peer pressure to be mechanically competent. It's a real learning experience for a student when a classmate says, "But you have to put a comma there for that to make sense." Suddenly that knowledge of the mechanics of writing becomes a real asset. Students in groups also seem to put more time into struggling for just the right word. From what they tell me, they rarely spend as much time on that individually. Since various members of the group contribute different words, they have to choose the best one on the basis of connotation and audience and therefore develop a real sensitivity

to word choice. While writing a description, one group tried out many related verbs--*frighten, alarm, startle, shock*--before deciding that *scare* had just the right, almost childish, connotation.

Another advantage of group writing that I have only recently recognized is that in the working world much writing is done "in committee"; reports are often written jointly and studies researched and written up by more than one person. Unfortunately, most students have no experience thinking and working in a group to produce a finished piece of writing, and these groups do provide training for future joint writing projects.

There are a few other major advantages to doing some group writing. Although we all value pre-writing and engage in pre-writing activities and stress to students the need for revision, all too often the students don't spend sufficient time on these steps. The format I establish with the groups necessitates that these steps be done, and students, therefore, put more time in on them than they might ordinarily.

Although I started using group writing simply to cut down on the number of papers I was grading, I have found that the other benefits are so valuable to me that I sometimes forget my original intent. Group writing is *not* a technique you would use all the time for every kind of assignment. Individual evaluation is very important, certainly, as is arriving at a semester grade that reflects the student's true ability. But sometimes it is nice to have students cooperate instead of compete, and I enjoy taking the focus from individual grading, and transferring it to good writing. Group writing is a pleasant variation with many advantages. The longer I work with writing groups, the more I discover their potential.

Cognitive Processes in Writing and Reading
Continued from page 7

[10] Dillon, *ibid.*, pp. 76-82. Dillon downplays the power of single words in creating coherence and points out the importance of frames and schemata in enabling readers to move inferentially from one unit of text to another.

[11] Smith, *ibid.*, pp. 168-172.

[12] Smith, *ibid.*, pp. 158-159. See also, Patricia Carpenter and Marcel Adam Just, "Reading Comprehension As the Eyes See It," in *Cognitive Processes in Comprehension*, Just and Carpenter, eds. (Hillsdale, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1977), 109-139.

[13] E.D. Hirsch, *The Philosophy of Composition* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1977), pp. 85-89. For criticism of this view and alternatives to it, see Dillon, *ibid.*, pp. 9-14; and DeBeaugrand, *ibid.*, pp. 284-285.

[14] Frank Smith, *Writing and the Writer*, (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1982), pp. 88-93.

[15] John R. Hayes and Linda S. Flower, "Identifying the Organization of Writing Processes," in *Cognitive Processes in Writing*, Lee W. Gregg and Erwin Steinberg, eds. (Hillside, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1980).

[16] Jose Ortega y Gasset, "Difficulty of Reading," *Complete Works, IX*, 2nd ed. (Madrid, 1965), p. 751. Ortega says, "Every utterance is deficient--it says less than it wishes to say. Every utterance is exuberant--it conveys more than it plans."

WRITTEN PRODUCTS AND WRITING PROBLEMS: ASSISTING STUDENTS IN OTHER DISCIPLINFS

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T. S. Eliot once said, "In order to arrive at what you do not know, you must go by the way of ignorance."[1] Eliot's statement, humbling though it may be, rings especially true as we try to unravel the complexities of writing and thinking. Led, seemingly, by the way of ignorance, we are, I trust, coming closer to knowing what we do not know about these complex, psycholinguistic processes. Though our reasons for learning about writing and thinking may differ and our methods for teaching them may seldom agree, we can agree on one thing: we still have *much* more to learn. As learners ourselves, then, we can sympathize with the student writer who, out of curiosity or coercion, comes to us and asks, "Can you help me with my writing?" As teachers and learners of writing, I believe our answer can and should be, "Yes, I can *try*."

But what if the student is from another discipline--say biology or physics or anthropology, for example? Or worse, what if this student has been "sentenced" (or "referred" in more *gentil* terms) by one of these departments to your charge for a period of "hard (writing) labor"? I suspect we would be a good deal less optimistic and a good deal more apprehensive about trying to "help" this type of student. I could envision myself spinning several excuses not to try: 1) the student's motivation would probably be poor, 2) my motivation to help this poorly-motivated student would, therefore, be poor, 3) my department's motivation to help me help this poorly-motivated student would probably be even poorer. But, if the truth were known, what I would probably be saying (though none but my ears could hear it) would be:

--I don't know much, if anything, about the writing that is done in other disciplines.

--I don't know what constitutes "good" or "bad" writing in these disciplines.

--What is more, I don't even know what to read as models for good writing in other disciplines.

In short, what I would probably feel like saying to this student is "Go away! I *can't* help you with your writing!"

This is precisely how I felt last spring when a graduate student from the Anthropology Department was "coerced" by her advisor into coming to the English Department at SUNYA for "help with her writing." Just one look at the title of her paper, "Paleodemographic Studies of Northeast North America," was enough to discourage me from accepting the job. I couldn't even find "paleodemography" in my dictionary. After several rereadings of page one, I was convinced that either my ignorance was bliss, or her bliss was ignorance; I neither understood the purpose of the paper nor the point which she was trying to make. Clearly, I thought, my eight years of teaching composition and my own studies in English had not prepared me for Rebecca's paper on paleodemography (which, by the way, I've since learned is the study of prehistoric artifacts to determine the distribution and density of populations).

Reluctantly, I offered to do what I could, anticipating that what I could do wouldn't be much. After several weeks of work, however, Rebecca and I agreed that some of the writing strategies we tried had been effective not only in helping her write but in helping her think about what she wanted to say. For those of you who would ask, "How can I assist students with their writing for courses in other disciplines?" we would like to suggest an approach--that helped--an approach which is based on several assumptions:

1. We assume that the writing teacher must be willing to learn about the kinds of writing and thinking done in this discipline, and that s/he must be willing to take the time and effort needed to learn, with the student, on a one-to-one basis.

2. We assume that the teacher must perceive his/her role as not simply a corrector of spelling, inspector of syntax, or arbiter of taste, but, more importantly, as an active participant in the discovery process.

3. We assume that good writing in any discipline can be produced by students as well as professionals, and that much can be learned by examining their written products.

4. We assume that various writing assignments make various intellectual demands upon the writer--demands, which, if identified and taught one at a time, can provide sound and effective strategies for writing.[2]

5. We assume--as do such current theorists as Walker Gibson,[3] James Kinneavy,[4] and James Moffett,[5]--that an understanding of audience and purpose is basic to all types of discourse, and, therefore, we would add, that this understanding is basic to discourse in the disciplines as well.

PROCEDURE

To begin, I asked Rebecca for a copy of the assignment and a copy of the paper that prompted her referral. Fortunately, her professor had distributed copies of the assignment, so we had a first-hand record of the task. It read:

PAPER. Each research paper is to be no fewer than 20 and no more than 50 pages long (excluding bibliography and title page). Each must be legibly typed and reproduced. The text and citation format of *American Antiquity* must be precisely followed. In addition to criticism of content, I will identify and mark all the common errors itemized on the attached pink inventory [incorrect spelling, error in logic, poor paragraph division, incomplete sentence, etc.]. Papers that contain more than a minimum of such visual noise cannot be read for content. Proper style and good usage are decidedly not unnecessary extras like luxury options on an automobile, but technical imperatives of scientific writing. I warn you specifically against the avoidance of headings and the use of one-sentence paragraphs, two of the most common ailments of graduate school writing.

You will be writing review papers, and for that reason you should not expect to make any major scientific breakthrough or even deal with new data. You may well have some broad and valuable insights once you have reviewed the topic; however, I expect that many of the papers resulting from this seminar will satisfy the search paper requirement of our programs, especially after they are rewritten in light of classroom criticism and discussion. Your conclusions should stress not grand truths, but the direction(s) future research in the topic you have selected can and should take. What is the promise and what are the limitations of research in the topical area you have selected? How can it be expected to contribute to anthropological research in the broadest sense?

Obviously, this assignment was designed to take more than two beers and two hours.

At our first conference, Rebecca explained that the audience for this paper had been her professor and her seminar classmates, each of whom had received a duplicate copy for classroom criticism and discussion. Most of them, she thought, knew what paleodemography was, but they were unfamiliar with the literature on the subject.

Next, I asked Rebecca to paraphrase, in one written sentence, what she thought was her *main* purpose for writing this paper. She wrote: "The purpose of this paper was to review the literature on paleodemographic studies in Northeast North America in order to suggest directions for future research." It was a good start, I thought, until she said she still wasn't quite sure what she and her professor meant by "review."

Our next step, then, was to find samples of reviews of anthropological literature. A random sampling of articles in *Anthropology Quarterly* produced several.

At our third conference, we examined these written products of professionals to identify what "reviewing" the literature meant. As we compared the articles, we discovered several patterns: 1) most often the reviewers proceeded in chronological order, highlighting research developments from past to present, 2) they always used a consistent text and citation format [e.g., (Flannery 1968; Lanning 1967:102; Stewart 1955:192], 3) they emphasized the strengths of the research, but more often, its limitations, 4) they ended with questions for future research. In short, we discovered that the task of the professional writers was not unlike Rebecca's. Perhaps more important than this discovery, though, was our discovery of recurrent rhetorical features and intellectual demands in these articles. For example, in each of the journal articles the writers:

--categorized the data (e.g., by using headings, subtopics, section divisions)
--began by defining terms (e.g., by classifying, contrasting, locating the topic geographically, historically)
--cited former research (e.g., Keller 1968:26) and its findings
--stated the purpose of the paper (e.g., "The purpose of this paper is ...," "In this paper I will deal with...," "This paper will attempt to trace...," "This paper examines...," "My sole concern is...")
--translated data into their own language when necessary
--related known data to their own research or on-site experiences
--stated limitations of their paper and the reasons for these limitations
--stated the significance of the data (e.g., to illustrate the paucity of research in this area, to raise issues, to refute former research, to support earlier research)
--mentioned limitations or weaknesses of former research (e.g., "It glosses over complex problems...," "fails to consider historical processes...")

What is more, Rebecca was quick to note, their writing had an apparent lack of one-sentence paragraphs.

Using this list of "model features," we then went to work on Rebecca's paper. She tackled headings first, then definitions, then citations, then a statement of purpose, etc. Not only had an examination of the written products of professionals given Rebecca a better understanding of what a "review paper" was, but it also had led her, indirectly, to discovering and eventually doing the kinds of *thinking* she would have to do to be successful at her task.

Before revising her paper completely, however, we tested our list of features against a superior "review paper" written by one of the graduate students in her seminar. Our hunch was right. The student paper had many of the same features as the published articles.

After incorporating these features into her own paper, Rebecca submitted the paper again; her professor was pleased. So was Rebecca.

CONCLUSIONS

In sum, I believe it is our responsibility as writers and thinkers to challenge the assumptions we may have about writing in the disciplines. If we are committed to dealing with the writing crisis, then we must, necessarily, be committed to dealing with students--all kinds of students--not just our own. I am not suggesting, of course, that we launch a large-scale offensive across the curriculum. What I am suggesting is that sometimes the old, tried-and-true teaching methods just might not work. What did work for us was a process of discovery wherein Rebecca articulated her audience and purpose, used written products purposefully, identified the intellectual demands of her task, and then consciously formulated and/or reformulated her ideas in light of these demands. Moreover, her writing "teacher" didn't have to be an expert in paleodemography to help. What was required, instead, was a willingness to try some different writing strategies--" to go by the way of ignorance," as Eliot might say, "in order to arrive at what we did not know.

NOTES

[1] "Four Quartets: East Coker, III," in *T.S. Eliot: Collected Poems 1909-1962* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1970), p. 187.

[2] I learned the usefulness of identifying rhetorical features and intellectual demands from Lee Odell, Dept. of English, State University of New York at Albany.

[3] Walker Gibson, *Persona* (New York: Random House, 1968).

[4] James Kinneavy, *A Theory of Discourse* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1971).

[5] James Moffett, *Teaching the Universe of Discourse* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1968).

IN MEMORIAM: ROBERT W. KELLNER (1940-1983)

Robert W. Kellner, state supervisor of English and Communication Arts Education, died unexpectedly on July 8, 1983, while serving on the staff of the Artists Studio for Young People in Poynette, Wisconsin. Bob joined the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction in 1977 where he stressed the importance of creative writing and was instrumental in the state's competency based testing program in language arts. He also supervised the development of the Wisconsin Alternative Curriculum Design in Basic English/Communication Skills for grades 9 and 10. Before coming to Wisconsin, Bob taught at the high school and college levels in the Chicago area. His bachelor and master degrees in English were taken at DePaul University in Chicago. Bob's tireless efforts on behalf of language arts education were recognized across the state and nation. His energy, intellect, humor, and love will be missed.

DEVELOPING WRITING SKILLS IN THE SOCIAL STUDIES CLASSROOM

COLLEEN A. WELPER
DeSoto High School, Minnesota

How many times have you assigned an essay for a course and been disappointed with the papers students handed in? Perhaps no one produced a meaningful discussion of the topic. Maybe most of the essays were short, sterile re-hashes of the text or class discussion. Or perhaps you found no evidence of student development of writing skills or ability to organize material. Such experiences are all too common among language-arts teachers no matter what curriculum they teach.

Students, generally, appear content to follow the course of least effort. Given such written assignments, even in the context of meaningful course work, too many students write as briefly as possible and produce papers containing as few ideas and paragraphs as will get by the essay specifications. In a history class, as in other courses, students complain that they are overwhelmed by the mass of information they are expected to process. In addition, many students appear unable to write so much as a single paragraph without constant reference to the source. Despite our admonitions about plagiarism they insist on writing with the book open before them.

Faced with classes in which such conditions prevail teachers soon question the validity of lengthy written assignments. Yet how else can students develop critical thinking and advanced writing skills? The answer lies in more complete teacher preparation and careful structuring of such assignments. Students need a nudge to get started thinking and must be shown how to put together examples, data, evidence to support their generalizations. They must be convinced that they have something worthwhile to say on the topic. They must be energized by the teacher's enthusiasm for writing. Ideally, students should write frequently, even daily, in all of their classes, so that the processes of thinking and writing become second-nature to them.

Such views are often not an effective part of teacher education programs. My participation in the 1982 Great River Writing Project at the University of Wisconsin-LaCrosse gave me an opportunity to survey the literature, talk to English teachers and compare views. The most important insight of my own experience, confirmed by the Writing Project, is that writing is a process composed of many steps and must be taught as such. The traditional one-shot essay assignments are obsolete in courses where teachers are serious about writing. Instead, the process of writing is practiced by the students, step by step, resulting in higher quality writing by even the poorest students. Important steps in this process include pre-writing, student evaluation of writing, and re-writing.

Pre-writing activites are endorsed by many language-arts teachers. They stimulate thought and initiate the flow of words which will ultimately become part of the essay. Pre-writing can be very simple: list five adjectives which describe the Puritans; state three characteristics of a strong President; write a paragraph describing one way to make a fortune in the late 19th century. Pre-writing can also be used to help students organize their essays: write a thesis statement; prepare an outline for your essay;

make a list of supporting facts, examples, ideas which can be used to demonstrate your thesis. Such activities are especially valid in a history course where students are bewildered by too many facts and by ideas they only half-comprehend. Without clues they cannot find the entry to the maze of facts and without guidance they cannot penetrate to an understanding of the issues. Pre-writing provides both.

Student evaluation of papers and re-writing are experiences which make students aware, and better practitioners, of the techniques of writing. Building a thoughtful essay which surveys the issues on a foundation of strong, factual sentences involves skills which students master through repetition. By reading other students' essays they learn to spot weaknesses in their own. By helping other students improve their writing the whole class is motivated toward a common goal. By insisting on re-writing the teacher instills respect for a quality product and issues a challenge which even low-ability students can achieve. Re-writing gives students the opportunity to re-think their ideas, re-arrange their organization, as well as correct their spelling and grammatical errors. The entire process fosters a more complete understanding of the topic as well as improvements in writing skills.

To illustrate this process of writing, consider the example of my sophomore U.S. History class. The course is required of all students for graduation. The curriculum is standard and the subject matter is the primary justification for the course. However, this class also offers an excellent opportunity to help students advance their thinking and writing skills. Over the years I have refined a process which emphasizes organization of ideas and discussion of issues in the essays assigned throughout the course.

In the first semester I plan a series of four essays. The topics for each vary from year to year but the objectives remain the same. The first is a "get-acquainted" essay, quite short, to assess the basic ability of each student. The topics are simple, with little class time spent on the work other than discussion of the topic.

The second paper focuses on organization of ideas and is always an American Revolution topic. All students write the same general topic based on the same body of information garnered from the text, supplementary readings, a film series. Here I also introduce some pre-writing: a worksheet to establish facts, a timeline for chronological development, a thesis statement, a one-paragraph summary, a list of supporting data. One entire class period is devoted to generating a basic outline, with several variations, and ideas for the introduction and conclusion. Students then write a rough draft and bring it to class for evaluation. In small groups, using a prepared evaluation sheet based on the pre-writing activities, the students read and criticize each other's papers. Special attention is given to organization of the body and supporting materials. Vocabulary and proper names are listed on the blackboard for quick reference. Students then have several days to re-write and turn in their final draft.

For the third essay students concentrate directly on the development of content material. The essential pattern of the project is the same as for the earlier paper. The topic, usually an early President, is chosen on the basis of available audio-visual materials. The text and supplementary readings are used primarily to provide factual background. Films, filmstrips, photographs, documents, television tapes provide interpretive material and stimulate small group discussions of the topic. Such materials encourage students to take notes, discuss and think about the topic, rather

than simply paraphrase a written source. Pre-writing activities can be planned to make the most of the media materials.

The topic is phrased in the plural to allow students to express their own opinions and to provide variety for the teacher when reading the final essays. Recent topics included "Three Leadership Qualities of George Washington," and "Andrew Jackson: A Strong President." In class we sketch several likely outlines, listing examples of supporting evidence for each, to provide help for the poorer students. If students observe that strong presidents often quarrel with the other branches of the government, then Jackson's veto of the bank bill and his defiant disregard of the Supreme Court decision in the Cherokee Removal case are good examples of supporting material. A minimum of two such examples are required for each major point of the outline. Adequate explanation of each incident or characteristic is also required. While evaluating the rough drafts, students scrutinize supporting data and assess the level of content development.

In the fourth essay the objective is to refine language usage while continuing development of organizational skills and content. By this time we have reached the Civil War, an era that has considerable interest for students. This is an opportunity to allow students more freedom in choosing topics for the extensive audio-visual materials available provide a generous data base outside of the text book. We spend two class periods developing appropriate language for the introduction, conclusion, and transitions, emphasizing the need to tie each part of the essay into the whole. Much of this work can be done in small groups as students write a paragraph, then ask someone else to evaluate it. This method allows the better students to assist others.

By this time the small group process functions more efficiently than at the beginning of the course. In the autumn students are self-conscious, reluctant to assert their opinions against those of the student authors. The poorer students do not spot errors or structural problems as readily as do the others. By winter, however, all have gained experience in reading and criticizing papers and have themselves benefited from the process. While each year a few students may opt not to participate, those who do come to appreciate the method. Their essays improve significantly during the year.

For my part, evaluation is primarily by objective and the development of a valid historical discussion of the topic. The emphasis on re-writing helps to clean up many of the spelling, punctuation, and grammar errors. In the early essays I let such problems slide, circling only the worst or most persistent items. Problems of organization and content development are more important. In the second half of the course I devote more attention, and grade points, to language skills. But this is a history course and my major concern is for breadth of discussion, chronological development, accuracy of details, general understanding of the thesis. For my purposes, writing is a process for teaching history, not the reverse.

The real pay-off, for myself and the students, comes in the second semester. In the third quarter, working with the sophomore English teacher and myself, the students write a research paper. The topics are limited to some aspect of U. S. history in the period 1789-1919 to coincide with my curriculum. I supervise the choice of topics, source materials, and content development. I also allow time for note-taking in class, both to ensure that the technique is acceptable and to reduce the likelihood of plagiarism. My colleague is primarily responsible for teaching the footnote

process and supervision of the writing. Both of us are available to provide help with problems, answer questions, and reassure students. We require outlines, thesis statements, and rough drafts.

The research project has become increasingly popular over the years. Students are intrigued by the two-grades-for-one-paper bargain. They also enjoy the release from routines and the opportunity to work on their own. We encourage them to choose topics which attract them, coincide with their avocations, or relate to local history. In recent years biographies of Indian chiefs, Civil War generals, and 19th century poets have been popular. Weaponry of all types, inventions, and the Black Hawk War (which came to a tragic end a few miles from the school) are perennial favorites. Requiring students to read more deeply on a subject, process the information, and write a paper results in improved thinking and language skills but also often stimulates interest in our national past.

The final project of the year takes up much of the fourth quarter. Students interview an older relative or friend on a specific period of the twentieth century: the Twenties, Great Depression, World War II. I prime them with an extensive list of general questions on lifestyle, education, society, the economy, and government. Each student must also prepare additional questions tailored to the locale, time period, and individual they plan to interview. Once the appointment is made, the questions asked, the students must organize their material and prepare an outline based on the conversation. We follow the established pattern but since the interviews are highly individual each student must work independently. Many students interview more than one person and must work out the verbal logistics of direct quotations, supplemental, and differing opinions. This project is also popular with the students, even though they are often intimidated by the necessity of interviewing an older person. The best essays result when the student develops the interview around a theme: farming in the 1930s, immigrant experiences, life at home during the war, teaching during the Depression in a one room school.

There is no doubt in my mind that writing enhances the learning of history. Students are forced to think about historical events, issues, and personalities. The process requires them to work through the maze of facts to an understanding of the topic. In many cases it also motivates their efforts in the routines of homework and class discussion between essay assignments. As part of our daily work students write frequently--summaries, descriptions, paragraphs to assess understanding of concepts. Daily writing provides for repetition of information but also underscores the value placed on writing by the teacher as part of the learning process.

While all of this writing is taking place in my classroom the same students are participating in the English 10 curriculum which also involves thinking and writing skills. During this year the students gain in confidence and their final essays reveal more extensive development of concepts, more successful organization, and greater facility in the use of language skills.

AVAILABLE DECEMBER 1, 1983

WCTE 1983 READING LIST
FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS PREPARING FOR COLLEGE

JOURNAL WRITING – WHAT THE KIDS THINK

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"Writing in your journal is like writing in a diary, but diaries are for girls," wrote Tony. Patrick decided that "journal writing is a waist of time." (I cringed at Patrick's spelling at the end of a year of ninth-grade English.) "The thing I noticed most about my journal," Debbie admitted, "is that after I got to feeling comfortable with it, I started going deeper into myself."

I had asked my high school freshman to reread the journals they'd kept for the entire school year, then to respond to three separate questions. First, I asked, "When you die, would you want your journal to be published, burned, read by someone you loved, read by someone who loved you, or something else altogether?" I added that they had to write at least one paragraph of explanation for their decisions. Next, I said, "Write in detail about your reaction to your journal. What changes have you noted in yourself. Are these changes positive or negative? How has your writing changed?" Finally, I asked, "Would you be interested in keeping another journal? Why or why not? If your answer was 'yes,' what changes would you make in it and why?"

A great number of boys wanted their journals burned unread. In fact, they wanted the books burned immediately so they wouldn't have to complete the assignment. Jonathan was very explicit about his decision to have his book burned. "The people I love or who love me," he wrote, "aren't really going to care about what I did in Drama the last week of November."

Several students were irritated by the enforced ten-minutes of journal writing at the beginning of each English class and had protested by writing only a sentence or two. Others disliked the weekly assignments I dictated every Monday and retaliated by listing the scores of all the previous day's sports events. I'd collected close to 50 journal writing assignments from graduate classes, books, newspapers, magazines and the students themselves. Topics include:

1. If you had the opportunity to return to this world after death, would you choose to return in two years, 10 years, 100 years, or 1000 years? Why?

2. Do you need privacy? How much? How little? If you had people around you continuously for some time, how would you feel? What do you think about privacy in your journal?

3. If you had five minutes of air time on national television, what would you say to your listeners? Why?

4. Pretend that all the duties, privileges and responsibilities had been given to those under the age of 18? How would your world be different?

5. What is the very first thing you can remember about your life? How old were you then? What do you think about this experience and about your ability to remember it?

Many students had enjoyed these weekly assignments and wanted to keep their journals. Ernie said, "When I die, I want my journal to be put away in a box in some attic. Someday, maybe years later, somone who remembers me will find it. Maybe it will bring back a lot of old memories or even stir someone's mind enough to tell other people and have them remember me

or even laugh at some of my experiences. The main point is, I don't want to be forgotten like so many other people are." Peter also wanted his journal "put someplace and forgotten. Then in 100 years somebody will find and read it. Then he or she can read about the struggle of a teenage nut who lived in the past."

Most of the girls wanted their journals preserved. Patty wanted her mother and sister to have the opportunity to read her journal because, "maybe if they read it, they would better understand my actions and feelings when I was alive. I know that many times their patience with me ran out and they would have liked to kill me, but they were understanding and loving and still are." Diane wanted "someone about my same age now to read it because I think it might help the reader find out they aren't the only ones to have problems similar to mine. Maybe they wouldn't feel so all alone as I did because they could see that I made it through the problems I had and I'm a better person for it." Norma wanted her journal "kept within the family as a historical reference." Unlike most of her classmates, she had written about local, national and world events in addition to her own feelings. As she reread her journal, she was pleased to have this extra perspective and shared her discovery with some of her friends.

Quite a few girls planned to pass their journals on to their children, especially their daughters, and to their grandchildren. Charlotte said, "I think it would be neat to read my mother's journal of her freshman year in high school and compare it to my own experiences." Peggy was even more specific. "If I had a daughter," she wrote, "I'd let her read my journal when she was 14 years old, so she would know how I looked upon life and felt about different subjects when I was her age. Sometimes younger people don't believe it when adults say, 'I've been through it so I know how you feel."

Although most of my students had made a big production of grumbling about having to write in their journals every day, the majority learned a lot about themselves in the process. Dorreen was surprised about "how much my mood changed from day to day." David noted that "my overall content changed. In the beginning, I would just write about anything to fill up the space . . . but by the end of the year, I noticed more understanding of how I felt and reacted to certain circumstances. I definitely feel I have matured over the year." Like a number of students, Naomi agreed. "I've matured a lot since we started school," she wrote. "I can handle situations now that I never thought I'd be able to. In a way my journal has been a very close friend." Brenda also noticed positive change. "I have gained confidence in myself," she said. "It's not as if I have to 'compete' with other girls any more. I just take myself the way I am and expect other people to do the same."

Kenny thought that journal writing was "a great way to let off steam and anger." Rebecca learned that "by writing things down, I've discovered that I'm able to break up my problems and work them out. When I write them and then go back over them in my mind, I can see them more clearly and am able to get things pretty straight inside." Vince was even more direct when he wrote, "I've learned the reason for my comical actions is because I have to have some form of back-up. You see, I feel that I am the ugly duckling of the bunch, so I use my jokes to attract attention."

About half of the students who'd kept a journal for the entire school year were definite about not wanting to keep another one. "I would much rather do homework," said Dave, much to my surprise. "Talking with my friends would have been much more fun than writing," claimed Billy. The rest, however, were interested in beginning new volumes as soon as school was over--and many had decided on a number of changes they'd make. Fern

Continued on page 30

A WRITER'S SUGGESTIONS FOR TEACHING CREATIVE WRITING

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University of Wisconsin—Whitewater

Searching for alternatives to the cinquain, or limerick, or love-sick poetry of your junior or senior high school creative writing class? I, too, would despair of teaching poetry at these levels if the possibilities for creativity remained in the same sing-song atmosphere year after year after year. Though poetry may be closest to our own hearts as adult readers, it becomes an entirely different challenge to teach creative writing classes, hoping that students might enjoy, after the lessons, even a fraction of shared interest of poetry that you have as an adult.

Where do we get our ideas about what to teach in our poetry workshops? As a poet who has worked with several state arts councils in the Poetry-In-the-Schools Project, I find that teachers, for the most part, remember what they were taught in their college courses. Remarkably, I also find that a number of teachers didn't even enjoy poetry, as a subject, in college. Or that they found it "difficult" or "puzzling." So often what happens in the process of moving from student to teacher of poetry is that the subject is reduced to its simpliest (and easiest) forms. And, if these simple forms (the couplet, the tanka or cinquain, or the haiku--or other variations) are easily mastered, the instructor is often left with that other notion, often misunderstood, or even abused, that poetry is feelings. Three weeks of love sick rhymed "I love you's" will quickly, and usually, make the teacher wonder what was so special and unique about poetry in the first place.

I teach *invention* in creative writing classes and I find more excitement for writing poetry this way than for all the short Japanese/Chinese or teenage heart throb poems you can read from now till .... What is invention? It calls for, most of all, throwing away (or setting aside) all the textbooks/guidebooks on how to teach poetry and learning how to rely on your own personal, excited interest in poetry. If personal excitement is not part of you, after the schoolbooks are set aside--then perhaps you will want to consider a return visit to the area college or university creative writing class to see what happened to that interest of long ago. But with that personal excitement, invention will allow your students to grow at remarkable speed in their appreciation of the great range of poetic experiments.

Over the last few years, I have prepared a series of activities that could, in many situations, last for the entire school year. So if you're looking for new strategies in teaching creative writing workshops, you might want to consider the following suggestions.

Begin to improvise ways in which poetry can be written in alternative mediums. My favorite is the FIRED CLAY MACRAME BELL SCULPTURE. With assistance from the local art instructor, help your students shape one pound balls of clay into 8" plaques, placing pencil holes in the top and bottom. Using any other tool other than a pencil, have students experiment with (back to the short haiku--but from a refreshing angle, I believe) short poetic forms. They can cut into, or build up letters on the clay. After green firing, glazing and final firing, have the students gather their plaques and macrame the pieces together with other objects (wood, sheafs of grain, colored yarn, etc.) so that all hang at different angles. Hang near an open window. You'll be surprised not only of the poetry, but of the

poetry-haiku-wind chimes. This exercise, lasting two to three weeks, gets the class off to a good start.

Variations: on butcher paper, have students try to account for how animals are the way they are, creating "Just So" stories somewhat like Rudyard Kipling's stories. With magic markers for "set design" and patience in lettering, the students can practice their own "creation stories" which is an easy lead-in to a more formal discussion of myth, legends and tales. By now both you and your students should be looking forward to your own inventive ideas of how to make creative writing both enjoyable and productive in unique ways.

Following a reading, out loud and dramatized, of Edgar Lee Masters' *Spoon River Anthology*, take your students to a nearby cemetery. Have them take grave rubbings and invent a dramatic monologue from that grave, preferably someone not in the family. After the rubbings and poems, have the students collect the work into a modestly produced mimeographed "Spoon River" with everyone contributing on the production end. This certainly will measure your students' interest in a larger creative writing journal produced in the last few weeks of the second semester. In addition to Spoon River poems, I would suggest a few weeks with epics you may be familar with, and in turn, showing how your creative writing class can conceive and write their own contemporary epics, including fantasy epics, or parodies of the old ones.

By now you're getting the feel for invention. Here are several more experiences, less detailed, for you and your class.

1. A week of ballads--to study and listen to--and a follow-up week of writing, practice and performance. I wouldn't suggest electric guitars and rock and roll unless you are the hearty type.

2. Start a column of poetry in either the school or town newspaper. Offer both opinion, or review, of new books of poetry (or old) as well as space for creative poetry or prose.

3. Visit the local art museum or gallery. Before going, share with your class all the poems based on paintings. The art museum is a great place to compose short scenes, or poetry, of what they see. (Excellent for descriptive writing skills!)

4. Every third week or so, ask that three students report on a modern or contemporary poet--from Poe to Dickinson to Frost to any contemporary poet with publications in your library. The report will build your students library skills and will provide a constant, steady background of major poets throughout the school year. Be sure the students read, dramatize and discuss the selected poems.

5. Tinker with the Masters. By now it's all right to introduce your favorite poems, for the students now have a flavor of what poets "do." Here you can introduce sonnets and odes--depending on how curious your students are. (Once excellent resource: Kenneth Koch's *Rose, Where Did You Get That Red?* If you feel a bit light-hearted, challenge your students to compose outlandish parodies of your favorite "time-honored" poems--they'll enjoy the experience just as much, perhaps even more, when they know they can wink and poke fun at such serious stuff. The poems will survive your students' corniness and yet they will have explored the work of master poets.

6. Adopt a poet. Either through the Wisconsin Arts Board (123 W. Washington Ave., Madison 53702) or your own resources, bring in a live poet

so that you and your students can talk with someone on the outside who writes poetry. Check your local writers guild if you have a limited budget. I'm sure someone could visit once a month throughout the year--looking at your students' work (and yours!) and offering suggestions. Also, get opinions of new books of poetry for your library which brings up the second part of this adoption--the sponsor. One parent might be able (might even want to!) to finance your extra expenses, but especially, a parent could help with perhaps $20 a year for new book purchases.

7. Ready to publish? As the volume of poetry and prose grows, consider publishing a modestly produced journal in which every student not only contributes material but editorial time as well (typists, designers, editors, artists, assemblers). Copies should go to your principal, the surrounding libraries and even (if you care to explore it) area and national poetry contests (check *Writer's Digest* or similar publications.)

8. And a final performance.... There are Rose Bowls and World Series and soon your school will expect its annual Poetry Festival in May, produced and directed by your creative writing class. Use the stage for dramatic performances of "Spoon River" poems, of epics, ballads and well-known and favorite poems; set up poems alongside photographs of painting; hang poster legends (or Just So stories) and clay poems. Even invite local or area poets to read from their work.

Finally, if you have made it through this year with just a few of these suggestions, I'm sure you will feel much more invigorated about the new year's creative writing class. You'll know what works well for your own situations and very likely, you will be inventing your own ideas about how to create exciting and challenging experiments in creative writing.

Journal Writing - What the Kids Think
Continued from page 27

wanted to include "more political happenings, not just my own life," after she heard about Norma's journal. Like many others, Sandy wanted to write at night and not have to stop after the required ten minutes. Several students said they wouldn't feel forced to write every day, but would make up for it by writing until they'd finished when they "really had something to say."

As I reviewed my students' journals, I noticed how candid they'd become. At the beginning of the year, they were very cautious about expressing their feelings because they didn't know whether they could trust me. The majority had not been exposed to journals before and were afraid they wouldn't write the "right thing" each day. But by May nearly everyone was open and direct. Almost too direct, I thought, when I read Beth's final comment. "While rereading my journal," Beth wrote, "I discovered that I really learned a lot this year--more than I have learned in any other year. Maybe the age to learn is 14. Then you start downhill from the top of the hill to the finish of the road. Oooops! Sorry, teacher!"

Although Beth thought I was going downhill, I did manage to learn a great deal about journals from this concluding assignment. Next year I won't be worried when my students protest about having to write every day because I'll know that they'll be benefiting greatly. I won't skip an occasional weekly assignment because I have proof that the topics do encourage thought and help develop imagination. While my students are writing, I'll be secure in the knowledge that they are maturing and becoming more aware of themselves and their world. In fact, I may start writing for the same ten minutes. I haven't crested that hill yet--in spite of Beth's dire words.

BOOKS
FOR CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS

Melvin Berger, *Bright Stars, Red Giants, and White Dwarfs*. Putnam, 1983.

Strongly written information books inform, teach, and stimulate thinking by organizing from the simple to the complex, the concrete to the abstract, and from the known to the unknown. They are organized in structures which stimulate interest, invite reader participation, indicate the purpose and direction of the book, build on children's background experiences and control for concept density. Berger admirably accomplishes these goals in *Bright Stars, Red Giants, and White Dwarfs*. The science fiction opening chapter "Death of Sun" catapults readers into a projected life in the year J4949 of the 10th Era when the sun is so hot that people have moved to the poles, coastal cities have flooded and interior land has become uninhabitable. Years later the sun has cooled so that people are living on space stations. The concluding paragraph of the chapter clearly and succinctly states the theories to be explored in this book about the life and death of stars such as our sun. Each of the following chapters open with a short clear summary paragraph stating the purposes of the chapter. The structure of each chapter frames the expertly related facts and theories along with their limitations in a well crafted, highly interesting whole which are clearly summarized in the concluding chapter. The book is both fascinating and informative. Readers from intermediate grades through adulthood will enjoy this book.
Mary Jett-Simpson, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

Kin Platt. *Brogg's Brain* and *The Ape Inside Me*. New York: Lippincott 1981 and 1979. JHS

Overcoming confusion about yourself is the focus of both *Brogg's Brain* and *The Ape Inside Me*. Monty Davis and Eddie Hill are both mixed-up fifteen year-olds who go to school at Emerson High in Los Angeles. The characterization of the boys is rather standard, yet the friends and adults in the books are carefully crafted, diverse, and provide telling advice. Each is influenced by understanding adults and friends who help guide them through their troubles. The boys show little or no understanding about the nature of their problem initially but gradually recognize solutions to their dilemas and they succeed.

Monty Davis is not sure if he has the heart to win the mile run. He learns from a mountain climbing book that he must conquer life's mountains in stages. With the help of many track enthusiasts, Monty develops his competitive drive and competitive heart so that he finally believes he can run and win. In the end, it is the idea and voice (Brogg's voice) from the movie "Brogg's Brain" that pushes him and helps him detach his mind from his body when he runs. *Brogg's Brain* has all elements of a "Rocky" movie in that Monty wins the mile run at the tape in record time. While the story line is exciting, the book seems contrived. There are too many track and running stars in the book: his father, a former track star; his English teacher, a four-minute miler in high school; Cindy Wantanabe, his marathoning girl-friend; and the ponytail girl who he races in the park. Monty, too, runs what seems to be a four-minute mile to win his race. A bit loaded, the book should not be considered a reliable comment on high school track and field.

Fighting is what Eddie Hill does often but with limited success. His temper, something he has labeled the ape inside him, (Kong's Voice) gets him into trouble. He fights with two boys who try to "rip him off," with Al Spencer, the fullback on the football team, with a group of beer drinking punks in the park, and with Leo, his divorced mother's boyfriend. Because of the fight, Leo leaves for good. Eddie feels responsible; he begins to pursue the idea of fighting as means of supporting himself and his mother. He is advised by the boxing gym manager to finish school and to learn to control his temper before considering a career as a fighter. The words ring true with Eddie and he learns to leash Kong, his temper, because of his relationships with Sal, Mr. Sierra, and Debbie Donaldson, a shy girl in his class at school. *The Ape Inside Me* is a realistic story with many strong insights and sensitive moments. The story line and characters seem natural and unforced. It's worth reading.
Andy Hanson, (student) University of Wisconsin-River Falls

Suzanne Gordon, *Off Balance: The Real World of Ballet*. New York: Pantheon, 1983. 216 pp. For grades 9-12.

Off Balance is a non-fiction account of the impact of ballet on the lives of dancers--especially women dancers--in certain top ballet schools and companies in New York and other American cities. The impact, Suzanne Gordon argues, is gravely harmful. The harm derives from a tradition of submission. Accordingly, high standards in ballet can be reached only if dancers devote themselves totally to their art and, therefore, subordinate themselves in virtually every aspect of their lives to the requirements of their company, as interpreted by its choreographers and artistic director. Preparation for a life of that sort begins early, as talented children move through increasingly demanding training programs which require that ordinary family life and schooling be modified. Especially talented young dancers are apt to move, as early as age fourteen, to a major ballet city for advanced training and performance. Their schedule then permits schooling only at odd hours or via correspondence study, and it permits virtually no work or social life outside ballet circles. Over and above time demands, the commitment to dance leads also to problems of another sort. The dancers stand in competition with one another for advancement; if one dancer falters, others surely will move up to take her place. Dancers learn that they are dispensible, replaceable. They become, therefore, increasingly dependent, increasingly eager to conform, increasingly abusive of themselves. They incur injuries--ligament damage, disintegrated knee caps, tendonitis, stress fractures--which they attempt to ignore or to cope with by medication, not by rest and treatment, so that their dedication will not be called into doubt. They starve themselves, sometimes bringing on serious malnutrition and anorexia nervosa, to exceed company standards for an ultra-thin look. In return, even if they succeed, they are paid less than the stage hands who move their props, and they face early retirement with poor pension relief and, generally, meager prospects for second careers.

It may seem from the above summary that Suzanne Gordon hates ballet. The opposite is true. She writes movingly of the beauty of ballet, citing its power to captivate performers and audiences. What she opposes is the assumption that high art *requires* traditions and practices that subjugate performers. Against this assumption she reviews aspects of Swedish and English ballet as well as certain developments in America, to suggest directions for reform.

In a youth culture marked generally by low levels of activity and weakly formulated ambitions, it can seem refreshing to watch highly motivated children troop off eagerly for demanding dance and sports activity. Gordon's book provides a reminder that the quality of the activity, as well as its power to compel effort, ought to be on our minds. It is a book fit for school use or library inclusion in that it also might help young readers to begin attending to that distinction.

Richard Western, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

FOR TEACHERS

Dickson, Paul. *WORDS*. New York: Delacorte Press, 1982.

Paul Dickson admits to being obsessed with words, collecting them with passion and diligence. This sampling of his collection is both intriguing and enjoying. The words are grouped into 52 chapters, each category listing and defining rare and odd words, specialized words and, certainly, fun words. Some examples: Outdoor Words; Monsters; Measured Words (Four Dozen Ways of Saying How Much or How Many); Loutish Words; Junk Words (A Catch of Contemporary Cliché's); Punks. In case you're interested there are 2,231 words and phrases for "drunk" in the "Soused Synonyms" chapter. Teachers and students can have fun and become both language wise and word lovers through *WORDS*. It is indeed, as its subtitle tells us, "a connoisseur's collection of old and new, weird and wonderful, useful and outlandish words."

Danner, Horace G. *Words from The Romance Languages*. Manassas, Virginia: Imprimic Press, 1980.

This "vocabulary" book is based on the concept of inductive reasoning. Words related to a common Latin element are grouped together on a page (there are 100 such groups), their common element and its meaning is to be discovered. On the following page are answers with explanatory notes that suggest relationships and language patterns. Certainly enlightening, occasionally entertaining, these notes add body and flavor to an already expressive structure. It presents, it seems, ready access to increased vocabulary, not merely as memorization but with comprehension.

Nicholas J. Karolides, University of Wisconsin-River Falls

SERVICE BULLETIN No. 29 - Index: *Wisconsin English Journal*/Volumes 1-15. Compiled by Eugene Engeldinger and Barbara Stevens, UW-Eau Claire. $2.00 - member/member libraries; $3.00 - non-members.

SERVICE BULLETIN No. 30 - Bibliography of Science Fiction. April, 1974. Compiled by Roger D. Sween, UW-Platteville. A listing, briefly annotated, of almost 300 recommended novels, short stories, and anthologies, 43 best films from 1902-1972, and 28 secondary sources included. $1.00

SERVICE BULLETIN No. 31 - Censorship in Wisconsin Public High Schools, 1973. Lee A. Burress, UW-Stevens Point. A follow-up of his 1964 study; current censorship trends and developments related to Supreme Court decisions. 75¢

SERVICE BULLETIN No. 34 - Books Students Recommend to Their Friends. Compiled by Mary K. Feirn and Joyce S. Steward, UW-Madison. $1.00

SERVICE BULLETIN No. 35 - An Annotated Bibliography of Fantasy Literature. Compiled by Robert H. Boyer and Kenneth J. Zahorski, St. Norbert College, DePere, Wis. An annotated listing of fantasy primary works, reference tools, full-length critical works, essays, magazines, associations, dealers and publishers. Complements Sween's Bibliography of Science Fiction (Service Bulletin No. 30). $1.00

SERVICE BULLETIN No. 36 - Research: Composition Teaching Methods and Purposes. "Teaching Public Written Discourse: The Blending of Communicative Effectiveness and Mechanical Correctness: by Joanne Yatvin, Crestwood School, Madison; "Writing Competencies Needed by High School Graduates" by Robert A. McKeag, UW-Oshkosh. 75¢

SERVICE BULLETIN No. 37 - Wisconsin Authors: Literary Map and Bulletin. Compiled by Duane and Maureen Roen. The twenty-three by twenty-nine-inch map includes drawings of scenes from the lives or the books of thirty-seven major Wisconsin authors. The map also includes a list of 126 adult authors and 60 juvenile authors. The 41-page bulletin includes all of the information found on the map, as well as a wealth of biographical and bibliographic material. Many titles listed are labeled as ones suitable for either elementary or secondary students. $3.00 plus $1.00 postage for map and bulletin ($1.00 for bulletin alone).

SERVICE BULLETIN No. 38 - Bibliography of Native American Books for Elementary Grades. April, 1979. Compiled by Maxine Burress, UW-Stevens Point. An annotated bibliography of books for children, grades K-8. Grade levels are indicated. 75¢

SERVICE BULLETIN No. 39 - Alcohol and Alcoholism in Children's Literature. Compiled by Carl Personke, UW-Madison. An annotated bibliography of books on alcohol, alcohol abuse and alcoholism. Evaluation of effectiveness is included. 60¢

SERVICE BULLETIN No. 40 - Index: *Wisconsin English Journal*/Volumes 16-20. Compiled by Barbara Stevens, UW-Eau Claire. See Service Bulletin No. 29. $1.00

SERVICE BULLETIN No. 41 - A Small Community Serves Its Gifted. April 1981. By Monica L. Josten, South Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Including: method of selecting students, handling problems, curriculum, and results of the program.

SERVICE BULLETIN No. 42 - Elementary Children's Writing--A Study and an Approach. Beverly Nordberg, Fox Point, 1982. Discussion of criteria for evaluating children's writing and their application. Teaching suggestions offered. 75¢

SERVICE BULLETIN No. 43 - Wisconsin Writers. Compiled by Robert Wells. An overview of current Wisconsin writers with a bibliography of their work. 75¢

SERVICE BULLETIN No. 44 - Evaluating Student Writing. February, 1982. Nancy S. Haugen, UW-Madison. Discussion of evaluation principles and tactics with specific time saving suggestions. 75¢

SERVICE BULLETIN No. 45 - Forty Short Writing Activities. November, 1983. Jane H. Yarbrough, University of Wisconsin Center, Marinette, Wisconsin. 75¢